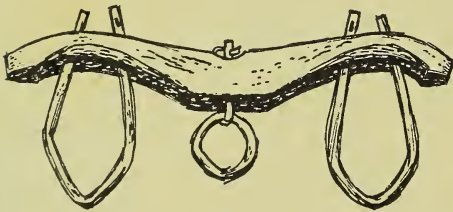


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Address before Monarch Club.

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Address Before Monarch Club

Albany, N. Y., February 11, 1936

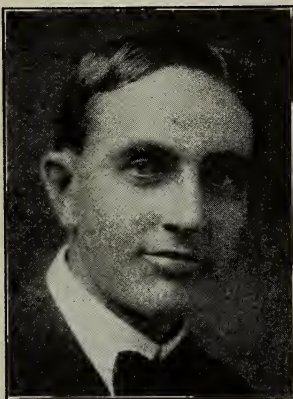
JOHN E. BOOS

Who within the borders of the nation would believe a Gettysburg Address or a First Inaugural could originate in the mind of a railsplitter, a village storekeeper, or a country lawyer; a man rough in dress, plain in appearance, as most politicians of the opposition described him; and that opposition was large, there being three parties arrayed against the Republican candidate in the campaign of 1860. How could a man whose rough boots had

pressed the soil of the Sangamon, the prairies and small towns of his native State have the boundless tact, infinite patience and tremendous ability to hold foreign powers in check, keep a large section of the country united in a great war, and carry that conflict to a successful conclusion. How could men from nearly every State in the Union sit in convention and nominate a man for President who was so little known by the average voter, when so many men of national prominence contested for a nomination that seemed reasonably sure of election and elevation as Chief Magistrate of the Republic. And how could they expect to elect the man whose personal appearance contrasted so strongly with Bell, Breckinridge and Douglas, the candidates of the opposing parties, orators who had stirred the nation, and whose ability, in and out of legislative bodies, was known everywhere.

The men who pushed the Lincoln candidacy had heard his famous debates, his speeches on the Constitution, knew of his ability to convince audiences, and they were sure if he were nominated, his plain language, his readiness to debate the vital questions of the time, would get more votes than any other leader that could be named.

None could see the greatness that was to come. The unaffected leadership, the



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power to get results without a fanfare of trumpets, and the simple thanks he could utter when Richmond surrendered and the Confederacy again became a part of the Union.

Who knew, or who even dared to think this awkward man, who called himself old at 55, and who was affectionately spoken of as Old Abe and Uncle Abe by nearly 2,000,000 men in uniform would in a half century be known and loved throughout the world.

Monuments to his memory would rise in many lands and his life's story would be written in every tongue.

It was this man who said, "God must love the common people, because He made so many of them," and it was this man who stood at the curb and called, "God bless you," to the passing regiments, who visited the camps and mingled with the soldiers, who pardoned so many for crimes committed he became the despair of the Secretary of War and the leading generals, and who could lay aside the affairs of State to give audience to the humblest person. His love for the common soldiers made him the army's Father as well as the leader, and they sang on march and at campfire, "We are coming, Father Abraham, 200,000 strong." He moved from cot to cot in the hospitals to cheer sick and dying men, to inspire the nurses to greater effort and to encourage the doctors to give even more of their strength for his boys' care.

"I saw him at the curb when the 6th Corps marched through Washington to repel the rebels in front of Fort Stevens," said Col. Terrell of the 43rd N. Y. Vols. "Hello, young man," said Lincoln to Mort Havens of the 7th N. Y. Heavy Artillery when he passed through the White House grounds one day. "The President pinned the Con-

gressional Medal of Honor on my breast in the office of the Secretary of War," said Major R. R. Riddell. "I saw Lincoln on the works at Petersburg," said E. A. Doty, and all of them were men who lived and worked and died in Albany. Charles E. Houghton was terribly wounded in the Fall of 1864, and Lincoln kissed the twenty-year-old boy as he lay on his bed of suffering, and again he kissed a boy who had brought him a message from Grant in the Wilderness, each of these incidents having been immortalized in story by prominent authors. All of these incidents proving the love and friendliness of the man who could walk with kings, but preferred his neighbors.

Legends have grown about him; "The Perfect Tribute," being one, and "He Knew Lincoln" another. And there are true stories about this man who loved everybody, almost too fine to believe and which a great many think are legends, too. One of them is the story of Tad Lincoln's nurse, and when I talked to that nurse about it, she said it was all true, and that Mrs. Lincoln often came in the sick room when the President sat by the bed, and removed his necktie, or took off his shoes while he went over state papers or wrote; and did other things to make him more comfortable, he allowing her to do as she pleased without a murmur of protest.

The story of Tad going in the Cabinet room and climbing on the President's knee, thus disturbing the deliberations of that august body; that finest, and most pathetic letter in the English language to Mrs. Bixby, who, he had been told, lost five sons on the field of battle, and the pardon of William Scott, who had fallen asleep while on picket duty.

That a legend! Read the story of patriotism and devotion of that young soldier, who afterward waded through a creek under heavy fire with a wounded comrade on his back and received a fatal wound just as he was about to step behind the Union earthworks. Go to that tiny village in the Vermont mountains and tell those folks the story of the Sleeping Sentinel is a fairy tale and it won't take them long to convince you of the truth.

The greatest trait in Lincoln's life was his love for his fellows, and no greater love has any man known.

During the campaign of 1860, a little girl wrote the following letter, which was found among Robert Lincoln's papers when he died and turned over to Congressman George A. Dondero of Royal Oak, Mich.

"Westfield, N. Y., Oct. 15, 1860.

Hon. A. A. Lincoln,
Dear Sir:

My father is just home from the fair and brought your picture and Mr. Hamlin's. I am a little girl only eleven years old, but want you should be President of the United States very much so I hope you wont think me very bold to write to such a great man as you are. Have you any little girls about as large as I am, if so give them my love and tell her to write me, if you cannot answer this letter. I have got 4 brothers and part of them will vote for you any way and if you will let your whiskers grow I will try and get the rest of them to vote for you, you would look a great deal better for your face is so thin. All the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husbands to vote for you and then you would be President. My father is going to vote for you and if I were a man I would vote for to but I will try and get everyone to vote for you that I can. I think that rail fence around your picture makes it look very pretty. I have got a little baby sister she is nine weeks old and is just as cunning as can be. When you direct your letter direct to Grace Bedell, Westfield, Chautauqua County, New York. I must not write any more. Answer this letter right off.

Good bye,

Grace Bedell."

In a few days the answer came, written as only a great loving father could write it.

"Private. Springfield, Ill., Oct. 19, 1860.
Miss Grace Bedell,
My Dear little Miss;

Your very agreeable of the 15th inst is received. I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughter, I have three sons, one seventeen, one nine, and one seven years of age. They, with their mother constitute my whole family. As to the whiskers, having never worn any, do you not think people would call it a piece of silly affectation if I were to begin wearing them now?

Your very sincere well-wisher,
A. Lincoln."

The little girl was delighted, and when the returns reached Westfield election night, she was sure she had helped elect the man whom her father had voted for and who her father said, would free the colored people.

The *New York Tribune* of February 16, 1861, said: "At Westfield station a flag inscribed 'Fort Sumter' was carried right up to where Mr. Lincoln stood, but he did not seem to take the hint, and made no illusion to it in his few remarks. He stated that during the campaign he had received a letter from a young girl in which he was kindly admonished to do certain things, and among others to let his whiskers grow, and that, as he had acted upon that piece of advice, he would now be glad to welcome his fair correspondent, if she was among the crowd."

Herman Sixby, who was afterward a Lieutenant in the 112th N. Y. Volunteers, lifted the little girl on the platform, and that little girl afterward wrote, "On the day that Mr. Lincoln called at Westfield, there was a large crowd gathered to hear him speak. I was a small girl and went to the depot with two of my older sisters. After making his speech from the step of the railroad car, he stepped down onto a freight platform and told the crowd that he had a correspondent in the place who thought he would look better if he wore a beard. He said that if she was present

he would like to see her. Everyone cried out, 'Who is she?' He replied, 'Grace Bedell.' I had not even heard him call my name, but a man, a friend of my family, took me, and the crowd parted to let us through. They lifted me onto the platform, and Mr. Lincoln took me by the hand and said, 'You see, Grace, I let these whiskers grow for you.' Then he kissed me. That is all. I was so frightened and excited that I knew not what to do. I had a bouquet of flowers in my hand, but I still had the stems when I arrived home."

The world reveres Abraham Lincoln. He, with Washington, has become the symbol of a nation. Though Jefferson wrote it, a Congress adopted it, and a Continental Army fought for it, Lincoln more than any other has made that phrase of the Declaration live, the phrase which reads, "That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The Lincoln who wrote, "Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government, nor of dungeons to ourselves." The Abraham Lincoln who could write these sentences, who stood head and shoulders above every leader in the great crisis, could be filled with love as well as master thoughts, and please a little girl by raising a beard.



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